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be fallible men, whose doctrine must itself be tried by Scripture, and tried thus by the members of their own flocks, according to their several ability. Such were, in the Jewish Church, the "Scribes," who, as our Lord said, "sat in Moses' seat," but who were, of course, not to be listened to when they (as He declared) "made the Word of God of none effect through their traditions."

Our Lord's words (Luke x. 16) were addressed to the hearers of his own inspired followers, and do not apply to ordinary teachers.

In Heb. xiii. 7 the Apostle expressly gives Christians a test by which to try the doctrines even of their teachers. "Jesus Christ"—as preached by his inspired messengers—"the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Now, we know no authentic record of that teaching except the Scriptures. The apostolic teaching as recorded for us in the Bible is, therefore, our test; and if Calvin and Luther had not made use of that, to try by it the doctrines of "those who bore rule over them," we confess that the Protestant Reformation "would never have had a being," though our religion would have still been taught in the Bible, whether men attended to it or not. But general commands to obey our pastors no more imply that we are to obey them in everything, without using our own judgments, than general commands to obey magistrates or parents imply that we should comply with their will when they require us to do wrong. We should obey both pastors and magistrates so far as we can without disobeying God.

OBJECTION 8.—Protestants deny that God has promised that the children of the Church should, in all ages, fear the Lord, and flourish in righteousness and abundance of peace, as long as the sun and moon shall endure. Because they will have it, that the whole Christian Church, before their Reformation, was fallen from her allegiance to God.

Their own Bible in plain terms contradicts this their assertion (Ps. lxxii. 5, 7)—*They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. In his days (that is, after the coming of Christ) shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.*

REPLY.—Protestants do not deny, but affirm that there always have been, and always will be, faithful worshippers, children of Christ's Church, who have feared the Lord, and shall do so "as long as the sun and moon endureth." And no one but a very ignorant Roman Catholic would pretend that his own church had always flourished in righteousness and peace; since every one acquainted with history is aware that, for many ages, it was distracted by divisions, had even rival Popes, and was overrun by a general corruption of morals.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

SIR—I want to come to the point about the doctrine of purgatory. I want to know, once for all, if it *was* or *was not*, the doctrine of the Church of Christ in the first ages. Let us take the first three centuries to begin with. I call upon some learned Catholic layman, or Catholic priest, to publish the opinions of the Fathers, who lived in those three centuries, in favour of purgatory. And I call on you, sir, to publish anything of this kind that may be sent to you. I hope our priests will see that it is essential that this should be done, in order to counteract the effect of your articles; and I hope that you will see that the fair play which you profess requires that you should publish it.

I hope some Catholic more learned than me will have the charity to come forward and do this, for I have not been able to do it myself.

I remain, your obedient,
A CATHOLIC.

P.S.—I hope you will insert this letter in every number of your paper, until a satisfactory answer appears.

We insert this letter willingly; and consider ourselves bound to insert any answer, which gives references, according to our rule. It is not usual to publish letters more than once; but the question which this letter puts is so important, that we will publish it in three numbers of the LAYMAN, to see if an answer can be got. But we could not undertake to publish it until a satisfactory answer (which we suppose means an answer giving passages from those Fathers in favour of purgatory) appears: for we are inclined to believe that we should, in that case, have to go on publishing it for ever. We believe that not a single sentence can be quoted from the Fathers of the three first centuries in favour of purgatory. But we think our correspondent's letter may provoke some one to send to us what the Fathers of those centuries have said against purgatory, in which there will not be the same difficulty.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

We have much pleasure in inserting the following letter from Mr. Aylmer. We are anxious to show our respected correspondent that we are willing to consider

fairly all he has to say; and therefore, as his letter is rather discursive, and embraces a great variety of topics, we have numbered the paragraphs, and, at some sacrifice of space, propose to give a separate answer to each, prefixing some general remarks, which we think necessary to place our views in a true light.

SIR—The April number of your journal contains, at pages 44 and 45, a rather lengthened notice of my letter to you in the month of March last, together with some allusions to my pamphlet on reading the Holy Scriptures.

Your present May number, at pages 51 and 52, resumes the latter subject, especially in reference to my view of the 39th verse of the 5th chap. of John.

You have so very fairly transcribed the whole of my argument, almost in juxta-position with your own remarks, that, I assure you, sir, I am quite satisfied to leave the controversy between us on its own merits, and to abide by the decision of a discerning public.

(1) I perceive, however, you wish me to say whether our Lord, in the particular text (St. John v. 39), "meant to speak of this Bible reading of the Jews with approbation or disapprobation."

I am clearly of opinion, from the context, that our Saviour neither intended to commend nor condemn the Jews on this head; but simply referred to it as one, it was to be supposed, most satisfactory to them, for the testimony or proof of his Divine mission, which it abundantly contained.

(2) In passing from the Jewish to the Christian dispensation, it is to be observed, that it was not a *written* law which was divinely prescribed for our guidance; but the *teaching* of the Apostles and their successors. The *unwritten* word was the first rule of Christianity.

(3) St. Irenæus, one of the most distinguished of the early Fathers of the Church, and a disciple of the great St. Polycarp, in his 3rd book against heresies,* chap. iv., thus expresses himself as to the error of pretending that the reading of the Scriptures is absolutely necessary to know what we ought to believe and practise, in order to work out our salvation:—"If the Apostles had not left us the Holy Scriptures, should we not be *equally bound* to follow and be guided by the *traditions* which they had intrusted to those to whom they had committed the charge of the churches which they had founded? Many barbarous nations, who have received the faith in Jesus Christ, have been guided by this rule; preserving, *without paper and ink*, the truths of salvation written in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, keeping traditions with the utmost care, and believing, through Jesus Christ the Son of God, in one God, creator of heaven and earth, and all that which exists therein. Those men, who have thus embraced the faith *without witnesses*, perhaps, may be esteemed barbarous without literature; but with regard to doctrine, religious practices, morals, and faith, they are wise, perfect, and acceptable to God: living in justice, wisdom, and chastity."

From this extract of the writings of so learned a doctor of the Church, one sees that there were multitudes of Christians, in the early ages, who had attained a complete knowledge of the articles of our faith, and a high degree of spirituality—"Made rich in Jesus Christ in all utterance and in all knowledge" (1 Cor. i. 5), though they had never read a syllable of the Sacred Volume.

(4) I must here dissent from your proposition, that the reading of the Scriptures is unquestionably of a "moral nature." I am sure, for the sake of your fair readers, you will not require me to cite book, chapter, and verses in the Old Testament to negative your assertions. But perhaps you may be of those who think that such and such narratives, because they are to be found in Scripture, are *not* of an immoral nature; to say so, in my humble opinion, is to aver that a wild beast springing from a thicket into a hermitage becomes harmless and tame.

(5) The "locking up" (as you express it), under peculiar circumstances, "of the treasure of heavenly wisdom," I consider anything but "a daring usurpation;" it is, in fact, but an obedience to the command of Christ himself, who forbade his Apostles to "cast pearls before swine" (St. Mat. vii. 6)—"that is to say (observe some of the most eminent commentators of the Churches of England and Rome), 'expose not the sacred truths and mysteries of the Gospel to the raillery of profane libertines and hardened Atheists—apply not the promises to the profane.' The transcendent excellency of Christ and his grace, made known and offered in the Gospel, is compared to a *pearl of great price*—Mat. xiii. 46. (6) At all events, "usurpation" or otherwise, I am quite certain you will agree with me, that it is by no means so great an exercise of authority as that *binding and loosing*, 'that discretionary power of forgiving and retaining sins, which, as Christ's legates, the priesthood unquestionably, according to God's Word, possess.—St. Mat. xviii. 18, St. John xx. 23, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20.

* Vid. Opera S. Irenæi Dom. Massueti edition. 1710; Likewise "Hist. Littéraire de la Ville de Lyon."

(7) I now join issue with you, and affirm, on Scriptural grounds, that the priests are to be regarded as the judges appointed by God to expound the law, and their expositions to be considered binding.—Ezekiel xlii. 24, Mal. ii. 7, St. John xv. 27, Acts viii. 26, and subsequent verses. (8) It is manifest that, since the *dead letter* cannot speak for itself, the Christian law, without a *living interpreter*, can be no rule of faith. No legislature ever made laws without providing judges and magistrates to explain and enforce them; for if we were to be exercising *private judgment*, where would be the end of litigation and dispute? (9) The Word of God consists not in the letter of Scripture, but in the *spirit and meaning*, of which, according to St. Paul, the priests are the "fit ministers."—2 Cor. iii. 6.

Insist not, therefore, on the *written* Word of God alone.

(10) Our Blessed Lord, as I before intimated, never wrote, or commanded his Apostles to *write* anything.

(11) "In these days (God) hath spoken, 'not written,' to us by his own Son."—Heb. i. 2. Christ did not say to his first missionaries, Go, write and distribute Bibles to all nations; but *Go, teach all nations* (St. Mat. xxviii. 19). (12) He did not say, He that readeth or heareth the Scripture heareth me; but, He that *heareth you* heareth me.—St. Luke x. 16. He did not say, He that will not read the Scripture; but, He that will not *hear the Church*, is to be considered as a heathen and a publican.—St. Mat. xviii. 17.

For these reasons, I contend for a two-fold rule of faith, consisting of Scripture and tradition, and most certainly an interpreting authority in the Church. (13) You cannot, observes St. Jerome, make your way into the Scriptures, without having a guide before you to show you the road; and what better selection could be made than from amongst those to whom "it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost (Acts xv. 28) to decide?" (14) St. Paul, in his 2nd Epistle to the Thessalonians, exhorts them to "stand fast, and hold the traditions which they have learned" (2 Thess. ii. xiv.); and, moreover, in the next chapter, charges them to withdraw themselves from every brother walking disorderly, and not according to the *tradition* which they have received.—2 Thess. iii. 6. The same Apostle praises the Romans (chap. v. 17), because they kept "that form of doctrine" into which they had been delivered. Confirmatory of this, he writes to Timothy (2 Tim. i. 13) "to hold the *form of sound words* which he had heard of him in faith."

I cannot regard Holy Scripture as the be-all, end-all, and *sine qua non* of religion, inasmuch as all necessary points of Christian doctrine were taught and believed for many years *before* any part of the New Testament was written. Besides, where do you leave the fact that, for nearly fifteen centuries, until the invention of printing, the whole Scripture was little better than a sealed book to the great Christian community? (15) To tell me, therefore, that the Bible is the sole rule of faith, is to advance a monstrous absurdity, and to state we were without any rule of faith for several hundred years! To preach to a man that he must take his faith from a book he is unable to read, is as preposterous as to advise a cripple to run for his life! Is it to controvert this you assert, at top of p. 52, that "the Scriptures were addressed to *all* and were to be read *by all*," because St. Paul (1 Thess. v. 27) charges the Thessalonians, that his first short five-chapter epistle to them should be read, not by, but to all the holy brethren? (16) From these observations, or indeed from anything I may write on the subject, I most sincerely hope you will not conclude that I either distrust or depreciate the Holy Scriptures. I hold my Bible in the highest estimation; I profess it to be the pure oracles of God, and that we are rather bound to lose our lives than concur any way to its profanation. My intention is to give evident proof that tradition, and the instruction of pastors, are as sufficient to make good Christians now as in the first ages of Christianity. (17) St. Augustine, in the fifth century, thought precisely as St. Irenæus in the second; and although the immediate cause of his own conversion was the incidental reading of a passage in St. Paul's Epistles, yet he says "that a man, animated with faith, hope, and charity, and guided by the decisions of his pastors, is in no need of Scripture, unless he had the charge of teaching others. I would not believe the Gospel, if the authority of the Church did not move me thereto."

I have already stated, in a former communication, that I am decidedly for Scriptural education, but administered in a proper and convenient form. I now say, what indeed may be as clearly inferred from my pamphlet, that the reading of the Holy Scriptures, when attended with the spirit of humility, *steady faith*, without which it is impossible to please God (Heb. xi. 6), and unreserved deference and docility to the decisions or interpretations of the Church, *cannot be too much recommended*. Further than this I cannot cede one iota. The Sacred Volume should never be made an ordinary school-book, nor the key of heaven to an unlettered craftsman.

(18) You have inquired where the true sense of the Holy Scriptures is to be found, which the Roman Church professes to enjoy; but which you assert she has never published.